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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 21 STATE 123222

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [AF](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE WAY
FORWARD IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN: TEXT OF SPEECH,
FACT SHEET, AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

REFS: (A) STATE 122731 (B) STATE 122234

11. (SBU) Summary: The President will announce his decision on the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan in an address to the nation from the United States Military Academy at West Point on December 1 at 8:00 p.m. eastern standard time. This cable contains information which we hope will be useful to you in engaging host governments, media, and the public after the President's address. The contents of the cable are strictly embargoed until December 1 at 8:00 p.m. eastern standard time. Please see paragraph two for the text of the President's speech; paragraphs three through seven for the fact sheet describing the way forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan; and paragraph eight for questions and answers on the review and the President's decision. The questions and answers are for internal use only and should not be released to the public. The fact sheet and transcript of the President's remarks will be posted on the White House public website at www.whitehouse.gov, along with translated versions in several languages. End Summary.

TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

12. (SBU) Remarks of President Barack Obama: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan, West Point, New York

BEGIN TEXT OF SPEECH. Good evening. To the United States Corps of Cadets, to the men and women of our armed services, and to my fellow Americans: I want to speak to you tonight about our effort in Afghanistan the nature of our commitment there, the scope of our interests, and the strategy that my Administration will pursue to bring this war to a successful conclusion. It is an honor for me to do so here at West Point where so many men and women have prepared to stand up for our security, and to represent what is finest about our country.

To address these issues, it is important to recall why America and our allies were compelled to fight a war in Afghanistan in the first place. We did not ask for this fight. On September 11, 2001, nineteen men hijacked four airplanes and used them to murder nearly 3,000 people. They struck at our military and economic nerve centers. They took the lives of innocent men, women, and children without regard to their faith or race or station. Were it not for the heroic actions of the passengers on board one of those flights, they could have also struck at one of the great symbols of our democracy in Washington, and killed many more.

As we know, these men belonged to al-Qa'ida a group of extremists who have distorted and defiled Islam, one of the world's great religions, to justify the slaughter of innocents. Al-Qa'ida's base of operations was in Afghanistan, where they were harbored by the Taliban a ruthless, repressive and radical movement that seized control of that country after it was ravaged by years of Soviet occupation and civil war, and after the attention of America and our friends had turned elsewhere.

Just days after 9/11, Congress authorized the use of force against al-Qa'ida and those who harbored them an authorization that continues to this day. The vote in the Senate was 98 to 0. The vote in the House was 420 to 1. For the first time in its history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization invoked Article 5 the commitment that says an attack on one member nation is an attack on all. And the United Nations Security Council endorsed the use of all necessary steps to respond to the 9/11 attacks. America, our allies and the world were acting as one to destroy al-Qa'ida's terrorist network, and to protect our common security.

Under the banner of this domestic unity and international legitimacy and only after the Taliban refused to turn over Osama bin Laden we sent our troops into Afghanistan. Within a matter of months, al-Qa'ida was scattered and many of its operatives were killed. The Taliban was driven from power and pushed back on its heels. A place that had known decades of fear now had reason to hope. At a conference convened by the UN, a provisional government was established under President Hamid Karzai. And an International Security Assistance Force was established to help bring a lasting peace to a war-torn country.

Then, in early 2003, the decision was made to wage a second war in Iraq. The wrenching debate over the Iraq War is well-known and need not be repeated here. It is enough to say that for the next six years, the Iraq War drew the dominant share of our troops, our resources, our diplomacy, and our national attention and that the decision to go into Iraq caused substantial rifts between America and much of the world.

Today, after extraordinary costs, we are bringing the Iraq war to a responsible end. We will remove our combat brigades from Iraq by the end of next summer, and all of our troops by the end of 2011. That we are doing so is a testament to the character of our men and women in uniform. Thanks to their courage, grit and perseverance, we have given Iraqis a chance to shape their future, and we are successfully leaving Iraq to its people.

But while we have achieved hard-earned milestones in Iraq, the situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated. After escaping across the border into Pakistan in 2001 and 2002, al-Qa'ida's leadership established a safe-haven there. Although a legitimate government was elected by the Afghan people, it has been hampered by corruption, the drug trade, an under-developed economy, and insufficient Security Forces. Over the last several years, the Taliban has maintained common cause with al-Qa'ida, as they both seek an overthrow of the Afghan government. Gradually, the Taliban has begun to take control over swaths of Afghanistan, while engaging in increasingly brazen and devastating acts of terrorism against the Pakistani people.

Throughout this period, our troop levels in Afghanistan remained a fraction of what they were in Iraq. When I took office, we had just over 32,000 Americans serving in Afghanistan, compared to 160,000 in Iraq at the peak of the war. Commanders in Afghanistan repeatedly asked for support to deal with the reemergence of the Taliban, but these reinforcements did not arrive. That's why,

shortly after taking office, I approved a long-standing request for more troops. After consultations with our allies, I then announced a strategy recognizing the fundamental connection between our war effort in Afghanistan, and the extremist safe-havens in Pakistan. I set a goal that was narrowly defined as disrupting, dismantling, and defeating al-Qa'ida and its extremist allies, and pledged to better coordinate our military and civilian effort.

Since then, we have made progress on some important objectives. High-ranking al-Qa'ida and Taliban leaders have been killed, and we have stepped up the pressure on al-Qa'ida world-wide. In Pakistan, that nation's Army has gone on its largest offensive in years. In Afghanistan, we and our allies prevented the Taliban from stopping a presidential election, and although it was marred by fraud that election produced a government that is consistent with Afghanistan's laws and Constitution.

Yet huge challenges remain. Afghanistan is not lost, but for several years it has moved backwards. There is no imminent threat of the government being overthrown, but the Taliban has gained momentum. Al-Qa'ida has not reemerged in Afghanistan in the same numbers as before 9/11, but they retain their safe-havens along the border. And our forces lack the full support they need to effectively train and partner with Afghan Security Forces and better secure the population. Our new Commander in Afghanistan General McChrystal has reported that the security situation is more serious than he anticipated. In short: the status quo is not sustainable.

As cadets, you volunteered for service during this time of danger. Some of you have fought in Afghanistan. Many will deploy there. As your Commander-in-Chief, I owe you a mission that is clearly defined, and worthy of your service. That is why, after the Afghan voting was completed, I insisted on a thorough review of our strategy. Let me be clear: there has never been an option before me that called for troop deployments before 2010, so there has been no delay or denial of resources necessary for the conduct of the war. Instead, the review has allowed me ask the hard questions, and to explore all of the different options along with my national security team, our military and civilian leadership in Afghanistan, and with our key partners. Given the stakes involved, I owed the American people and our troops no less.

This review is now complete. And as Commander-in-Chief, I have determined that it is in our vital national interest to send an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. After 18 months, our troops will begin to come home. These are the resources that we need to seize the initiative, while building the Afghan capacity that can allow for a responsible transition of our forces out of Afghanistan.

I do not make this decision lightly. I opposed the war in Iraq precisely because I believe that we must exercise restraint in the use of military force, and always consider the long-term consequences of our actions. We have been at war for eight years, at enormous cost in lives and resources. Years of debate over Iraq and terrorism have left our unity on national security issues in tatters, and created a highly polarized and partisan backdrop for this effort. And having just experienced the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, the American people are understandably focused on rebuilding our economy and putting people to work here at home.

Most of all, I know that this decision asks even more of you - a military that, along with your families, has already borne the heaviest of all burdens. As

President, I have signed a letter of condolence to the family of each American who gives their life in these wars. I have read the letters from the parents and spouses of those who deployed. I have visited our courageous wounded warriors at Walter Reed. I have travelled to Dover to meet the flag-draped caskets of 18 Americans returning home to their final resting place. I see firsthand the terrible wages of war. If I did not think that the security of the United States and the safety of the American people were at stake in Afghanistan, I would gladly order every single one of our troops home tomorrow.

So no I do not make this decision lightly. I make this decision because I am convinced that our security is at stake in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is the epicenter of the violent extremism practiced by al-Qa'ida. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11, and it is from here that new attacks are being plotted as I speak. This is no idle danger; no hypothetical threat. In the last few months alone, we have apprehended extremists within our borders who were sent here from the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan to commit new acts of terror. This danger will only grow if the region slides backwards, and al-Qa'ida can operate with impunity. We must keep the pressure on al-Qa'ida, and to do that, we must increase the stability and capacity of our partners in the region.

Of course, this burden is not ours alone to bear. This is not just America's war. Since 9/11, al-Qa'ida's safe-havens have been the source of attacks against London and Amman and Bali. The people and governments of both Afghanistan and Pakistan are endangered. And the stakes are even higher within a nuclear-armed Pakistan, because we know that al-Qa'ida and other extremists seek nuclear weapons, and we have every reason to believe that they would use them.

These facts compel us to act along with our friends and allies. Our overarching goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies in the future.

To meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al-Qa'ida a safe-haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to overthrow the government. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's Security Forces and government, so that they can take lead responsibility for Afghanistan's future.

We will meet these objectives in three ways. First, we will pursue a military strategy that will break the Taliban's momentum and increase Afghanistan's capacity. The 30,000 additional troops that I am announcing tonight will deploy in the first part of 2010 the fastest pace possible so that they can target the insurgency and secure key population centers. They will increase our ability to train competent Afghan Security Forces, and to partner with them so that more Afghans can get into the fight. And they will help create the conditions for the United States to transfer responsibility to the Afghans.

Because this is an international effort, I have asked that our commitment be joined by contributions from our allies. Some have already provided additional troops, and we are confident that there will be further contributions in the days and weeks ahead. Our friends have fought and bled and died alongside us in Afghanistan. Now, we must come together to end this war successfully. For what's at stake is not simply a test of NATO's credibility what's at stake is the security of our Allies, and the common security of the world.

Taken together, these additional American and

international troops will allow us to accelerate handing over responsibility to Afghan forces, and allow us to begin the transfer of our forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011. Just as we have done in Iraq, we will execute this transition responsibly, taking into account conditions on the ground. We will continue to advise and assist Afghanistan's Security Forces to ensure that they can succeed over the long haul. But it will be clear to the Afghan government and, more importantly, to the Afghan people that they will ultimately be responsible for their own country.

Second, we will work with our partners, the UN, and the Afghan people to pursue a more effective civilian strategy, so that the government can take advantage of improved security.

This effort must be based on performance. The days of providing a blank check are over. President Karzai's inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction. And going forward, we will be clear about what we expect from those who receive our assistance. We will support Afghan Ministries, Governors, and local leaders that combat corruption and deliver for the people. We expect those who are ineffective or corrupt to be held accountable. And we will also focus our assistance in areas such as agriculture that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people.

The people of Afghanistan have endured violence for decades. They have been confronted with occupation by the Soviet Union, and then by foreign al-Qa'ida fighters who used Afghan land for their own purposes. So tonight, I want the Afghan people to understand America seeks an end to this era of war and suffering. We have no interest in occupying your country. We will support efforts by the Afghan government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens. And we will seek a partnership with Afghanistan grounded in mutual respect to isolate those who destroy; to strengthen those who build; to hasten the day when our troops will leave; and to forge a lasting friendship in which America is your partner, and never your patron.

Third, we will act with the full recognition that our success in Afghanistan is inextricably linked to our partnership with Pakistan.

We are in Afghanistan to prevent a cancer from once again spreading through that country. But this same cancer has also taken root in the border region of Pakistan. That is why we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border.

In the past, there have been those in Pakistan who have argued that the struggle against extremism is not their fight, and that Pakistan is better off doing little or seeking accommodation with those who use violence. But in recent years, as innocents have been killed from Karachi to Islamabad, it has become clear that it is the Pakistani people who are the most endangered by extremism. Public opinion has turned. The Pakistani Army has waged an offensive in Swat and South Waziristan. And there is no doubt that the United States and Pakistan share a common enemy.

In the past, we too often defined our relationship with Pakistan narrowly. Those days are over. Moving forward, we are committed to a partnership with Pakistan that is built on a foundation of mutual interests, mutual respect, and mutual trust. We will strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that threaten our countries, and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe-haven for terrorists whose location is known, and whose intentions are clear. America is also providing substantial resources to support Pakistan's

democracy and development. We are the largest international supporter for those Pakistanis displaced by the fighting. And going forward, the Pakistani people must know: America will remain a strong supporter of Pakistan's security and prosperity long after the guns have fallen silent, so that the great potential of its people can be unleashed.

These are the three core elements of our strategy: a military effort to create the conditions for a transition; a civilian surge that reinforces positive action; and an effective partnership with Pakistan.

I recognize that there are a range of concerns about our approach. So let me briefly address a few of the prominent arguments that I have heard, and which I take very seriously.

First, there are those who suggest that Afghanistan is another Vietnam. They argue that it cannot be stabilized, and we are better off cutting our losses and rapidly withdrawing. Yet this argument depends upon a false reading of history. Unlike Vietnam, we are joined by a broad coalition of 43 nations that recognizes the legitimacy of our action. Unlike Vietnam, we are not facing a broad-based popular insurgency. And most importantly, unlike Vietnam, the American people were viciously attacked from Afghanistan, and remain a target for those same extremists who are plotting along its border. To abandon this area now and to rely only on efforts against al-Qa'ida from a distance would significantly hamper our ability to keep the pressure on al-Qa'ida, and create an unacceptable risk of additional attacks on our homeland and our allies.

Second, there are those who acknowledge that we cannot leave Afghanistan in its current state, but suggest that we go forward with the troops that we have. But this would simply maintain a status quo in which we muddle through, and permit a slow deterioration of conditions there. It would ultimately prove more costly and prolong our stay in Afghanistan, because we would never be able to generate the conditions needed to train Afghan Security Forces and give them the space to take over.

Finally, there are those who oppose identifying a timeframe for our transition to Afghan responsibility. Indeed, some call for a more dramatic and open-ended escalation of our war effort one that would commit us to a nation building project of up to a decade. I reject this course because it sets goals that are beyond what we can achieve at a reasonable cost, and what we need to achieve to secure our interests. Furthermore, the absence of a timeframe for transition would deny us any sense of urgency in working with the Afghan government. It must be clear that Afghans will have to take responsibility for their security, and that America has no interest in fighting an endless war in Afghanistan.

As President, I refuse to set goals that go beyond our responsibility, our means, our or interests. And I must weigh all of the challenges that our nation faces. I do not have the luxury of committing to just one. Indeed, I am mindful of the words of President Eisenhower, who in discussing our national security said, "Each proposal must be weighed in the light of a broader consideration: the need to maintain balance in and among national programs."

Over the past several years, we have lost that balance, and failed to appreciate the connection between our national security and our economy. In the wake of an economic crisis, too many of our friends and neighbors are out of work and struggle to pay the bills, and too many Americans are worried about the future facing our children. Meanwhile, competition within the global

economy has grown more fierce. So we simply cannot afford to ignore the price of these wars.

All told, by the time I took office the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan approached a trillion dollars. Going forward, I am committed to addressing these costs openly and honestly. Our new approach in Afghanistan is likely to cost us roughly 30 billion dollars for the military this year, and I will work closely with Congress to address these costs as we work to bring down our deficit.

But as we end the war in Iraq and transition to Afghan responsibility, we must rebuild our strength here at home. Our prosperity provides a foundation for our power. It pays for our military. It underwrites our diplomacy. It taps the potential of our people, and allows investment in new industry. And it will allow us to compete in this century as successfully as we did in the last. That is why our troop commitment in Afghanistan cannot be open-ended because the nation that I am most interested in building is our own.

Let me be clear: none of this will be easy. The struggle against violent extremism will not be finished quickly, and it extends well beyond Afghanistan and Pakistan. It will be an enduring test of our free society, and our leadership in the world. And unlike the great power conflicts and clear lines of division that defined the 20th century, our effort will involve disorderly regions and diffuse enemies.

So as a result, America will have to show our strength in the way that we end wars and prevent conflict. We will have to be nimble and precise in our use of military power. Where al-Qa'ida and its allies attempt to establish a foothold whether in Somalia or Yemen or elsewhere they must be confronted by growing pressure and strong partnerships.

And we cannot count on military might alone. We have to invest in our homeland security, because we cannot capture or kill every violent extremist abroad. We have to improve and better coordinate our intelligence, so that we stay one step ahead of shadowy networks.

We will have to take away the tools of mass destruction. That is why I have made it a central pillar of my foreign policy to secure loose nuclear materials from terrorists; to stop the spread of nuclear weapons; and to pursue the goal of a world without them. Because every nation must understand that true security will never come from an endless race for ever-more destructive weapons true security will come for those who reject them.

We will have to use diplomacy, because no one nation can meet the challenges of an interconnected world acting alone. I have spent this year renewing our alliances and forging new partnerships. And we have forged a new beginning between America and the Muslim World one that recognizes our mutual interest in breaking a cycle of conflict, and that promises a future in which those who kill innocents are isolated by those who stand up for peace and prosperity and human dignity.

Finally, we must draw on the strength of our values for the challenges that we face may have changed, but the things that we believe in must not. That is why we must promote our values by living them at home which is why I have prohibited torture and will close the prison at Guantanamo Bay. And we must make it clear to every man, woman and child around the world who lives under the dark cloud of tyranny that America will speak out on behalf of their human rights, and tend to the light of freedom, and justice, and opportunity, and respect for the dignity of all peoples. That is who we are. That is the moral source of America's authority.

Since the days of Franklin Roosevelt, and the service and sacrifice of our grandparents, our country has borne a special burden in global affairs. We have spilled American blood in many countries on multiple continents. We have spent our revenue to help others rebuild from rubble and develop their own economies. We have joined with others to develop an architecture of institutions from the United Nations to NATO to the World Bank that provide for the common security and prosperity of human beings.

We have not always been thanked for these efforts, and we have at times made mistakes. But more than any other nation, the United States of America has underwritten global security for over six decades a time that, for all its problems, has seen walls come down, markets open, billions lifted from poverty, unparalleled scientific progress, and advancing frontiers of human liberty.

For unlike the great powers of old, we have not sought world domination. Our union was founded in resistance to oppression. We do not seek to occupy other nations. We will not claim another nation's resources or target other peoples because their faith or ethnicity is different from ours. What we have fought for and what we continue to fight for is a better future for our children and grandchildren, and we believe that their lives will be better if other peoples' children and grandchildren can live in freedom and access opportunity.

As a country, we are not as young and perhaps not as innocent as we were when Roosevelt was President. Yet we are still heirs to a noble struggle for freedom. Now we must summon all of our might and moral suasion to meet the challenges of a new age.

In the end, our security and leadership does not come solely from the strength of our arms. It derives from our people from the workers and businesses who will rebuild our economy; from the entrepreneurs and researchers who will pioneer new industries; from the teachers that will educate our children, and the service of those who work in our communities at home; from the diplomats and Peace Corps volunteers who spread hope abroad; and from the men and women in uniform who are part of an unbroken line of sacrifice that has made government of the people, by the people, and for the people a reality on this Earth.

This vast and diverse citizenry will not always agree on every issue nor should we. But I also know that we, as a country, cannot sustain our leadership nor navigate the momentous challenges of our time if we allow ourselves to be split asunder by the same rancor and cynicism and partisanship that has in recent times poisoned our national discourse.

It is easy to forget that when this war began, we were united bound together by the fresh memory of a horrific attack, and by the determination to defend our homeland and the values we hold dear. I refuse to accept the notion that we cannot summon that unity again. I believe with every fiber of my being that we as Americans can still come together behind a common purpose. For our values are not simply words written into parchment they are a creed that calls us together, and that has carried us through the darkest of storms as one nation, one people.

America we are passing through a time of great trial. And the message that we send in the midst of these storms must be clear: that our cause is just, our resolve unwavering. We will go forward with the confidence that right makes might, and with the commitment to forge an America that is safer, a world

that is more secure, and a future that represents not the deepest of fears but the highest of hopes. Thank you, God Bless you, God Bless our troops, and may God Bless the United States of America. END TEXT OF SPEECH.

FACT SHEET: The Way Forward in Afghanistan and Pakistan

¶3. (SBU) Our Mission: The President's speech reaffirms the March 2009 core goal: to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al-Qa'ida and to prevent their return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan. To do so, we and our allies will surge our forces, targeting elements of the insurgency and securing key population centers, training Afghan forces, transferring responsibility to a capable Afghan partner, and increasing our partnership with Pakistanis who are facing the same threats.

This region is the heart of the global violent extremism pursued by al-Qa'ida, and the region from which we were attacked on 9/11. New attacks are being planned there now, a fact borne out by a recent plot, uncovered and disrupted by American authorities. We will prevent the Taliban from turning Afghanistan back into a safe haven from which international terrorists can strike at us or our allies. This would pose a direct threat to the American homeland, and that is a threat that we cannot tolerate. Al-Qa'ida remains in Pakistan where they continue to plot attacks against us and where they and their extremist allies pose a threat to the Pakistani state. Our goal in Pakistan will be to ensure that al-Qa'ida is defeated and Pakistan remains stable.

¶4. (SBU) Review Process: The review was a deliberate and disciplined three-stage process to check alignment of goals, methods for attaining those goals, and finally resources required. Over ten weeks, the President chaired nine meetings with his national security team, and consulted key allies and partners, including the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The President focused on asking the hard questions, took the time to carefully consider all of the options, and united a variety of competing views in his cabinet before agreeing to send any additional Americans to war.

As a result of the review, we have focused our mission and developed a common understanding regarding our regional approach and the need for international support. We will deploy forces into Afghanistan rapidly and will take advantage of these additional resources to create the conditions to begin to draw down combat forces in the summer of 2011, while maintaining a partnership with Afghanistan and Pakistan to protect our enduring interests in that region.

The meetings were focused on how best to ensure the al-Qa'ida threat is eliminated from the region and that regional stability is restored. We looked closely at the alignment of our efforts and the balance between civilian and military resources, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the efforts of the U.S. and the international community.

A number of issues were explored in depth: national interests, core objectives and goals, counterterrorism priorities, safe havens for terrorist groups in Pakistan, the health of the global U.S. military force, risks and costs associated with troop deployments, global deployment requirements, international cooperation and commitments for both Afghanistan and Pakistan, and Afghan capacity in all areas to include Afghan security forces, central and sub-national governance and corruption (including the narcotics trade), and development and economic issues.

¶5. (SBU) What Has Changed Since March: Since the President announced our renewed commitment in March, a

number of key developments led the Administration to review its approach in Afghanistan and Pakistan: new attention was focused on Afghanistan and Pakistan, new U.S. leadership was established in Afghanistan, Pakistan increased its efforts to combat extremists, and the situation in Afghanistan has become more grave.

The United States assigned new civilian and military leadership in Afghanistan, with the appointments of Ambassador Karl Eikenberry as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, and General Stanley McChrystal as the new Commander of ISAF military forces in Afghanistan. Upon arrival in Afghanistan, both Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal recognized that after eight years of underresourcing, the situation was worse than expected. Together, Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal published a new Civilian-Military Campaign Plan to integrate U.S. efforts across the country.

Afghanistan's difficult, extended election process and evident signs of the absence of rule of law made clear the limits of the central government in Kabul.

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the Pakistanis showed new resolve in defeating militants who had taken control of the Swat Valley, just 60 miles from Islamabad. Pakistani political leaders including opposition party leaders came together to support the Pakistani military operations. This fall, the Pakistanis expanded their fight against extremists into the Mehsud tribal areas of South Waziristan along the border with Afghanistan.

16. (SBU) The Way Forward: The President has decided to deploy an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to Afghanistan. These troops will deploy on an accelerated timeline to reinforce the 68,000 Americans and 39,000 non-U.S. ISAF troops already there, so that we can target the insurgency, break its momentum, and better secure population centers. These forces will increase our capacity to train effective Afghan Security Forces, and to partner with them so that more Afghans get into the fight. And by pursuing these partnerships, we can transition to Afghan responsibility, and begin to reduce our combat troops in the summer of 2011. In short, these resources will allow us to make the final push that is necessary to train Afghans so that we can transfer responsibility.

We will maintain this increased force level for the next 18 months. During this time, we will regularly measure our progress. And beginning in July 2011, we will transfer lead security responsibility to Afghans and start to transition our combat forces out of Afghanistan. As Afghans take on responsibility for their security, we will continue to advise and assist Afghanistan's Security Forces, and maintain a partnership on behalf of their security so that they can sustain this effort. Afghans are tired of war and long for peace, justice, and economic security. We intend to help them achieve these goals and end this war and the threat of reoccupation by the foreign fighters associated with al-Qa'ida.

We will not be in this effort alone. We will continue to be joined in the fight by the Afghans, and the aggressive partnering effort envisioned by General McChrystal will get more Afghans into the fight for their country's future. There will also be additional resources from NATO. These allies have already made significant commitments of their own in Afghanistan, and we will be discussing additional alliance contributions in troops, trainers, and resources in the days and weeks ahead. This is not simply a test of the alliance's credibility what is at stake is even more fundamental. It is the security of London and Madrid; of Paris and Berlin; of Prague, New York, and our broader collective security.

We will work with our partners, the United Nations, and the Afghan people to strengthen our civilian effort, so that Afghanistan's government can step in as we establish better security. President Karzai's inauguration speech sent the right message about moving in a new direction, including his commitment to reintegration and reconciliation, improving relations with Afghanistan's regional partners, and steadily increasing the security responsibilities of Afghan security forces. But we must see action and progress. We will be clear about our expectations, and we will encourage and reinforce Afghan Ministries, Governors, and local leaders who deliver for the people and combat corruption. We will not reinforce those who are not accountable and not acting in the service of the Afghan people and the state. And we will also focus our assistance in areas such as agriculture that can make an immediate impact in the lives of the Afghan people.

¶7. (SBU) Civilian Assistance: A continuing significant increase in civilian experts will accompany a sizable infusion of additional civilian assistance. They will partner with Afghans over the long term to enhance the capacity of national and sub-national government institutions and to help rehabilitate Afghanistan's key economic sectors so that Afghans can defeat the insurgents who promise only more violence.

Growth is critical to undermine extremists' appeal in the short term and for sustainable economic development in the long term. Our top reconstruction priority is implementing a civilian-military agriculture redevelopment strategy to restore Afghanistan's once vibrant agriculture sector. This will help sap the insurgency of fighters and of income from poppy cultivation.

An emphasis of our governance efforts will be on developing more responsive, visible, and accountable institutions at the provincial, district, and local level, where everyday Afghans encounter their government. We will also encourage and support the Afghan Government's reinvigorated plans to fight corruption, with concrete measures of progress toward greater accountability.

A key element of our political strategy will be supporting Afghan-led efforts to reintegrate Taliban who renounce al-Qa'ida, lay down their arms, and engage in the political process.

¶8. (SBU) Our Partner in Pakistan: Our partnership with Pakistan is inextricably linked to our efforts in Afghanistan. To secure our country, we need a strategy that works on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The costs of inaction are far greater.

The United States is committed to strengthening Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that pose the greatest threat to both of our countries. A safe haven for those high-level terrorists whose location is known, and whose intentions are clear, cannot be tolerated. For Pakistan, we continue to encourage civilian and military leadership to sustain their fight against extremists and to eliminate terrorists' safe havens in their country.

We are now focused on working with Pakistan's democratic institutions, deepening the ties among our governments and people for our common interests and concerns. We are committed to a strategic relationship with Pakistan for the long term. We have affirmed this commitment to Pakistan by providing \$1.5 billion each year over the next five years to support Pakistan's development and democracy, and have led a global effort to rally additional pledges of support. This sizable, long-term commitment of assistance addresses the following

objectives:

(1) Helping Pakistan address immediate energy, water, and related economic crises, thereby deepening our partnership with the Pakistani people and decreasing the appeal of extremists;

(2) Supporting broader economic reforms that are necessary to put Pakistan on a path towards sustainable job creation and economic growth, which is necessary for long-term Pakistani stability and progress; and

(3) Helping Pakistan build on its success against militants to eliminate extremist sanctuaries that threaten Pakistan, Afghanistan, the wider region, and people around the world.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS THE REVIEW

19. (SBU) Why Review?

- In the six months after the strategy was announced in March, several important factors changed:

- New U.S. leaders were assigned to Afghanistan, with both a new Ambassador and a new NATO commander arriving in Kabul;

- The Taliban proved resilient as General McChrystal reported in his assessment;

- Across the border, Pakistanis took the fight to the extremists that threatened their state; and

- The Afghan election process highlighted serious questions of corruption which hampers effective governance in Afghanistan.

What is the President's decision?

- Our overall goal remains consistent: "to disrupt, dismantle, and eventually defeat al-Qa'ida and to prevent their return to either Afghanistan or Pakistan."

- This more focused strategy includes four main objectives for Afghanistan:

- Targeting the insurgency to prevent a return of al-Qa'ida and the Taliban's overthrow of the Afghan Government.

- Denying the insurgency access to and control of key population centers.

- Training Afghan forces so that they can secure their own country.

- Transferring responsibility for security to Afghanistan by creating conditions that will allow us to reduce the U.S. and international force level in Afghanistan beginning in 2011.

- Our strategy is refined to reflect changing regional realities, and our desire to send a clear message of international resolve to our allies and the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan, demonstrated by:

- Serious long-term investments in our partnership with Pakistan and redoubling efforts to assist Pakistan in its fight against extremists.

- Working in Afghanistan toward realistic and targeted improvements in security, governance, and development, which are focused on key ministries in the center and specific sub-national elements of

government.

- As the President said in March: "Going forward, we will not blindly stay the course. Instead, we will set clear metrics to measure progress and hold ourselves accountable. We'll consistently assess our efforts to train Afghan security forces and our progress in combating insurgents. We will measure the growth of Afghanistan's economy, and its illicit narcotics production. And we will review whether we are using the right tools and tactics to make progress towards accomplishing our goals." Why are we adding tens of thousands of additional troops into Afghanistan when al-Qa'ida is not there? Why are you proposing this enormous military footprint in Afghanistan when there are all sorts of other places that al-Qa'ida actually is e.g., Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan, etc.?

- Al-Qa'ida designed the 9/11 attack in Afghanistan.

- Afghanistan remains vulnerable to al-Qa'ida reestablishing safe havens.

- The terrain, strategic location, and governance structures of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border region make it uniquely attractive and useful as a safe haven for al-Qa'ida.

What is different about the new approach?

- Target, Train and Transfer: The new plan gets more troops into the region a surge sooner than initially anticipated. It will allow us to target insurgent forces. By relying on the partnering plan outlined by General McChrystal, it also accelerates the timeline for building the Afghan security forces. With more capable Afghan National Security Forces, we are creating the conditions to begin to hand over the main responsibility for security to Afghan forces starting July 2011.

- Pakistan: Pakistani political leaders including opposition party leaders came together to support the Pakistani military operations. This fall, the Pakistanis expanded their fight against extremists into the Mehsud tribal areas of South Waziristan along the border with Afghanistan. Our strategy recognizes this shift and is designed to deepen our partnership with Pakistan as we redouble our efforts to assist the Pakistanis in their fight against our common enemy, the extremists.

- International Engagement: The new implementation guidance places greater emphasis on an international contribution to Afghanistan, asking our allies to do more to support the civilian government and the growth of the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police.

- Governance: The new plan puts the emphasis on the Afghan Government to assume greater responsibility for combating corruption, improving governance and providing security for the Afghan people. If you are stating that you are withdrawing in 2011, won't the enemy just wait us out? Aren't you signaling a lack of resolve to the Afghans and the enemy?

- Let's be clear here. Since President Obama came into office, he has nearly tripled the amount of U.S. forces and civilians in Afghanistan. Our U.S. commitment speaks for itself. This commitment, however, cannot and should not be open-ended. The Afghan National Security Forces and Afghan people are capable and want to be self-governing and self-securing. We will help them set the conditions over the next two years so that we can begin to transfer responsibility to them for security in July 2011.

Why did the review take so long?

- This review looked at the problem from all directions and represented a whole of government approach. The President by his deep personal engagement took a team with a range of views on this matter and developed a consensus approach that creates an all-of-government effort in Afghanistan.
 - The process was a serious look at the situation on the ground, the assumptions under which we were operating, and our goals and objectives in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The President led a serious review, ensured all views were heard, asked the central and important questions that forced members of his national security team to challenge their own staffs to think hard about the problem and even harder about the solutions.
 - The President wanted to make sure that his effort to get the strategy right honored the men and women, military and civilian, U.S. and allied, who are risking their lives to implement it on the ground as well as to our allies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and elsewhere in the region, who are counting on this international effort to ensure regional security that goes far beyond the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan.
 - No additional units were sought before 2010, so the review did not result in any delay in getting additional troops into Afghanistan.
- Why should the American people support this revised strategy?

- Affording al-Qa'ida and its extremists allies an unchallenged safe haven in Afghanistan or Pakistan puts the United States and our allies around the world at an unacceptable level of risk.
 - This strategy ensures that we are clearly focused on al-Qa'ida and the threat it poses to the Homeland.
- What is our strategy in Pakistan?
- Our partnership with Pakistan is linked to our efforts in Afghanistan. To secure our country, we need a strategy that works on both sides of the border to ensure that al-Qa'ida cannot count on a safe haven in Afghanistan or Pakistan from which it plans attacks on us or our interests.
 - The United States is committed to strengthening Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that pose the greatest threat to both of our countries. A safe haven for those high-level terrorists whose location is known, and whose intentions are clear, cannot be tolerated.
 - Defeating these extremists requires a partnership with Pakistan. This strategy affirms that partnership by providing \$1.5 billion each year over the next five years to support Pakistan's development and democracy. The United States has led a global effort to rally additional pledges of support.

What is our new strategy in Afghanistan?

- We have a vital interest in Afghanistan and Pakistan. We must keep the pressure on al-Qa'ida, and we must bring stability to the region. This is the wellspring of the violent extremism practiced by al-Qa'ida. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11. It is from here that new attacks are being plotted as we speak. This is no idle danger, nor hypothetical threat. In the last few

months alone, we have apprehended extremists within our borders who were sent here from these safe havens to commit acts of terrorism.

- This danger will only grow if the region slides backwards, and al-Qa'ida can operate with impunity. And this burden is not ours alone to bear. This is not just America's war. Since 9/11, al-Qa'ida's safe havens have been the source of attacks against London and Amman and Bali. The people and governments of both Afghanistan and Pakistan are endangered. And the stakes are even higher within a nuclear-armed Pakistan, because we know that al-Qa'ida and their allies seek nuclear weapons, and we have every reason to believe that they would use them.

- These facts compel us to act. And our overarching goal remains the same: to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to prevent its capacity to threaten America and our allies from either country in the future.

- To meet that goal, we will pursue the following objectives within Afghanistan. We must deny al-Qa'ida a safe haven. We must reverse the Taliban's momentum and deny it the ability to control population centers. And we must strengthen the capacity of Afghanistan's National Security Forces and government, so that they can take the lead and take responsibility for Afghanistan's future. Is the new approach COIN or CT?

- The situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan is complex requiring a multi-disciplined approach. It includes elements of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency.

- The President has committed the resources to degrade the Taliban and ensure it does not overthrow the Afghan Government.

- At the same time, we are expanding our counterterrorism campaign.

- The new approach draws on the expertise of General Petraeus the country's foremost expert on COIN and General McChrystal the country's foremost expert on counterterrorism, and is reinforced by Ambassador Eikenberry, who has served three tours in Afghanistan in both civilian and military capacities. We will use both approaches to target extremists, train new security forces, and transfer authority to a capable Afghan force. The American public seems to no longer support sending troops to Afghanistan - is it time to leave?

- The President recognizes that this may not be the most popular decision, including within his own party. But he is committed to keeping the American people safe. And this strategy will keep the heat on al-Qa'ida, which still seeks to do us harm, while more rapidly training Afghans to assume security operations in their own country. As we transition to Afghan lead, we will begin to bring our troops home. I have heard analysts say that al-Qa'ida is in Pakistan and not in Afghanistan. Why aren't we focusing more on Pakistan?

- We are focusing on both Pakistan and Afghanistan. We are working closely with the Pakistani military to support their efforts to country extremists in their territory, while continuing to train Afghans so that al-Qa'ida will not have a safe haven in either country.

- We have a vital interest in Afghanistan and

Pakistan. We must keep the pressure on al-Qa'ida, and we must bring stability to the region. It is from here that we were attacked on 9/11. It is from here that new attacks are being plotted as we speak. This is no idle danger, nor hypothetical threat. In the last few months alone, we have apprehended extremists within our borders who were sent here from these safe havens to commit acts of terrorism. President Karzai has done little to demonstrate that he has changed. Why should we invest further in Afghanistan without first seeing progress in improving Afghanistan governance from Karzai?

- In his inauguration speech, President Karzai announced a new chapter with the Afghan people and outlined a new Compact with his people focused on improving governance, reducing corruption, reintegrating insurgents who wish to come back into Afghan society, enhancing economic development, and helping Afghanistan establish its role in the region.

- In the area of corruption, President Karzai has already established a Major Crimes Task Force and an Anti-Corruption Tribunal, demonstrating his commitment to fighting corruption.

- President Karzai has publicly and privately expressed his desire for progress in these key areas in Afghanistan in the months and years ahead, and renewed his commitment to serve the Afghan people who have reelected him as their President. We will continue to demand results from the Afghan Government and will ensure that our investments are targeted to well-functioning and transparent institutions and individuals.

This year, Afghanistan became the second most corrupt nation in the world, ranking 179th out of 180 countries on Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index, falling from 176th in 2008 and 172nd in 2007. Why hasn't the United States been able to reduce corruption in Afghanistan, and what does the United States intend to do differently under the new strategy?

- The United States Government recognizes that the high level of corruption in Afghanistan undermines security, development, and rule of law objectives, undermines the legitimacy of the Afghan Government, and contributes to the country's illicit narcotics trade.

- In his inauguration speech, President Karzai has announced his desire to address corruption and recently announced the establishment of a Major Crimes Task Force (MCTF) and the Anti-Corruption Tribunal (ACT). He also announced plans to reform the existing High Office of Oversight.

- President Karzai has publicly and privately expressed his desire for progress in these key areas in Afghanistan in the months and years ahead, and renewed his commitment to serve the Afghan people who have reelected him as their President. We will continue to demand results from the Afghan Government and will ensure that our investments are targeted to well-functioning and transparent institutions and individuals. We haven't seen much progress in building the Afghan police and military in the past few years? Why should we believe that we will be able to hand over to Afghans anytime soon?

- Training efforts to date have been underresourced, and the plan developed by General McChrystal draws on the lessons learned from Iraq.

- General McChrystal's plan calls for us and our allies to accelerate our efforts to build the Afghan National Security Forces, and calls for a substantial increase in trainers and support to grow the Afghan National Security Forces.

- Until this year, training the Afghan National Security Forces was not a priority and not properly resourced. We have not yet begun to feel the full effect of the 4,000 new U.S. trainers we deployed in September. Increased participation by our NATO allies in training efforts, focused leadership development, expanded training units, and other efforts aimed at improving retention within the forces, will accelerate progress.

We have heard a lot about the disagreement between General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry. What has been the reaction of Ambassador Eikenberry and General McChrystal to the President's decision? Will the additional resources and guidance meet General McChrystal's needs as outlined in his assessment?

- General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry released statements affirming their commitment to our mission in Afghanistan.

- The President has full confidence in General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry.

- They will testify together soon after the President's announcement.

Your own Ambassador to Afghanistan questioned the wisdom of adding new troops. Why was Ambassador Eikenberry wrong?

- You know, the President did bring together people with a range of views on this effort. And over the course of 10 meetings and 30 hours of deliberations, he brought them together to a consensus, all-of-government approach on one of the world's most volatile regions.

- Ambassador Eikenberry fully supports General McChrystal's assessment and has never opposed the addition of troops, which are necessary to bolster the Afghan National Security Forces. He fully supports the President's decision. Ambassador Eikenberry was a key participant of the review process, and he expressed his views fully and privately.

Can Congress have access to the Eikenberry cables? If not, why not?

- Ambassador Eikenberry will be available to discuss his viewpoints with Members.

- His communications were part of a confidential, presidential deliberative process.

What is the political solution in Afghanistan? We were hoping for an Afghan President with a mandate from the electorate and the legitimacy that entails. We don't have that; so can we achieve our mission with this current Afghan Government?

- President Karzai has an extraordinarily difficult job. He had important accomplishments during his first term, but there were also disappointments. We welcome President Karzai's inaugural commitment to working towards our common goals in security, providing services to the Afghan people, anti-corruption, and economic reconstruction.

- Governance is not just about Kabul or President Karzai; legitimacy is not just about elections.

- Our new strategy recognizes the political dimensions of the Afghan conflict. It supports Afghan Government efforts to reintegrate those willing to renounce al-Qa'ida, lay down arms, and participate in the free and open society enshrined in Afghan constitution.

President Karzai has as his Vice President a known warlord and as a key backer an accused war criminal. How can the United States Government do business with these kinds of people?

- In recent years, President Karzai has appointed competent ministers in key ministries, and we will continue to partner with such ministers.

- The face of the Afghan Government for many Afghans is their local leadership, tribal elders, or religious figures, not the central government.

- Our new strategy is to expand our partnership with these and other sub-national actors and institutions, in coordination with the national government.

What steps will you take to make sure our own aid and contracting doesn't fuel corruption?

- Given the great amount of resources devoted to Afghanistan, our programs and processes receive extraordinary measures of oversight, including by a Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction.

- USAID programs have been audited multiple times, and all United States Government agencies are required by law to vet potential contractors' names against public websites to ensure that money isn't going into the hands of known terrorists and criminals.

- A viable, licit economy and increased security are the long-term solutions to cutting down on this kind of criminality.

- We work closely with the Afghans and international partners to take tactical action against specific targets involved in financing of the Taliban and al-Qa'ida and to build the capacity of our Afghan partners in strategic areas to better track their funds.

Aren't we going to be continuing to have to put in billions of dollars per year for the next 10, 20, 30 years, and aren't we going to have to leave our troops there for the foreseeable future? When does it end? How long will we have our troops there, and how long

- This new strategy is designed to more rapidly train Afghans so they can join in the fight to secure their country. President Karzai wants Afghanistan to assume security responsibilities as soon as possible and that is what this strategy will do.

- And even as we drawdown our combat forces at the end of this extended surge, we will contribute to international training and financial support to Afghan National Security Forces.

- Our economic assistance and civilian support to Afghanistan will be long term. Afghanistan is one of the world's poorest countries and is susceptible to violent extremism that impacts U.S. interests.

To me this plan and the vast amounts of resources that will inevitably come with it are nation-building

extraordinaire (Senator Corker characterized the Administration's efforts this way at an earlier briefing). How can we afford to do this during a time when Americans are out of work and hurting; and when we have record deficits? Are you proposing to pay for this new Afghanistan surge by just adding to the debt and putting it on the backs of our kids and grandkids or are you going to raise taxes? Is the Administration willing to make some tough trade-offs here?

- All of our programs in Afghanistan are tied to our national security objective to prevent the return of al-Qa'ida. Preventing al-Qa'ida's return requires strengthening Afghan institutions to oppose violent extremism.

- This is not nation building. It is a targeted effort to target extremists, train capable Afghan forces, and transfer authority to those forces and the Afghan Government.

Why aren't NATO countries and the rest of our allies putting more troops and resources on the table?

- Other allies and partners have indicated support for the President's announcement, and we are now engaged in extensive discussions regarding additional assistance, including troops, trainers, and financial commitments.

- NATO committed additional resources following our March 2009 strategy announcement.

- Japan recently announced \$5 billion in assistance for Afghanistan, and many other countries have expanded their support.

What does victory in Afghanistan look like?

- When the Afghans can take control of their own security and can handle a degraded Taliban and when al-Qa'ida does not have a safe haven in either Afghanistan or Pakistan.

Aren't you coming up short on your promised tripling of civilians? When are they all going to be on the ground? What's taking so long?

- State and other civilian agencies have moved faster in surging staff into Afghanistan than ever before; we have more than doubled the number of civilians already on the ground since January, and we are on track to meet the goal of tripling the number of civilians with the right people in the right place at the right time. This is a sharp contrast to the experience in Iraq where civilians were deployed to meet numerical goals but without the right skills.

- Today, we have names and arrival dates for all but 66 positions which means that 94 percent of the positions will be filled by the end of the year or very early next year.

- The civilian plan has adapted to evolving requirements -- we accelerated our schedule by three months and expanded the number to incorporate new needs identified by Ambassador Eikenberry and his team during the course of the strategic review.

If Afghanistan is the national security priority you say it is, why do we not even have 1,000 civilians serving there versus the tens of thousands of troops? When is the State Department finally going to step up to the plate and have some capacity?

- Unlike their military counterparts, civilians are selected and deploy as individuals, not battalions.

- The civilian impact is far greater than numbers: the average civilian leverages 10 partners -- locally employed staff, Afghan and international experts from U.S.-funded NGOs.

- There's a different purpose and way of working on the civilian side: we want the civilians supporting and building the capacity of their Afghan counterparts who must be the forward face of these shared programs.

Why are we still so reliant on private contractors in Afghanistan and even in Pakistan? Why is Blackwater / Xe still operating in both countries?

- We do not want to get into a discussion about what contractors may or may not be operating in Afghanistan or Pakistan.

- Even while we are providing greater resources to both Afghanistan and Pakistan, State and USAID are implementing a major shift in how we program funds.

- Pursuant to the President's push to move away from contractors, we are:

- Doing more through the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, even while reinforcing their Ministries' abilities to account for and implement programs; and

- Identifying local NGOs who can take on more programs, with oversight from a larger number of direct-hire Americans who are more directly involved in designing and monitoring programs.

- Contract services are sometimes needed. For those cases, we have strengthened monitoring and contracts. We have clearly signaled zero tolerance of contractor impropriety and our actions to force the removal of misbehaving employees and to review terms of such contracts sends that message loudly.

Al-Qa'ida's top leadership is in Pakistan; terrorists from Pakistan infiltrated Mumbai, India, and killed dozens of people; and all I see in this latest plan is more coddling of the Pakistani Government. We've treated the Pakistanis with kid gloves the past eight years..when are we finally going to play some hard ball?

- Pakistan is a complex country, but also a critical ally in our common effort to fight violent extremists and promote regional security. We have a serious and ongoing dialogue with Pakistan on combating al-Qa'ida and other extremists in South Asia. We work cooperatively with Pakistan to strengthen its counterinsurgency capacities to combat extremists.

- We understand and appreciate the sacrifices the people of Pakistan are making to win the war against extremism and bring security and peace to their country. Hundreds of Pakistani security officials have been killed in the fight against al-Qa'ida and the Taliban in Pakistan.

Do you believe the Pakistani Government maintains ties to extremist groups?

- We have made clear to Pakistan that confronting violent extremism of all types is in its own interest and in the interest of regional stability.

- The Government of Pakistan increasingly sees violent extremists as a threat to the Pakistani state as well as to regional stability.

Isn't the Pakistani Government just as corrupt as the Afghan Government? Isn't our money going to be wasted, especially if you move ahead with your plans to put more money through Pakistani organizations?

- We take corruption in Pakistan seriously and are taking measures to monitor closely our aid disbursement in Pakistan and to make sure that it accomplishes its intended purpose.
- Among the steps we are taking:
 - The appointment of Ambassador Robin Raphael as the economic assistance coordinator in Pakistan to closely supervise all assistance to the country;
 - Establishment at Embassy Islamabad of offices for the Inspectors General for State, USAID, and DOD; and
 - Planning to increase the number of USAID personnel in Pakistan to supervise ongoing projects there, including at the provincial and local levels.

If we can't make progress without India and Pakistan coming to some agreement, what are you doing to work on that?

- We have strong bilateral relations with India and Pakistan that are based on shared interests.
- We believe both India and Pakistan have an important role to play in stability and security of South Asia. We are engaged with them both and encourage them to work together to bring peace to their region.
- Ultimately, it is up to India and Pakistan to set the pace and parameters for improving their relations.

Recent reporting, including by Seymour Hersh, indicate that Pakistani nuclear weapons are unsafe and that the United States has plans to seize Pakistan's nuclear assets. Can you assure the American people that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is 100 percent safe?

- The United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or material and has confidence in the ability of the Pakistani Government to protect its nuclear assets.

Does the United States have plans to seize Pakistan's nuclear weapons if they are in danger?

- The United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or material and has confidence in the ability of the Pakistani Government to protect its nuclear assets.

10. (SBU) Budgetary Implications of the Af-Pak Strategy

The President's decision to expand the U.S. efforts in Afghanistan is based on the best interests of U.S. security. The financial costs were a concern, but not the concern.

The direct costs for the military related to the new strategy in Fiscal Year 2010 are expected to range between \$25 billion and \$30 billion. There may be additional costs associated with, for instance, the diplomatic and civilian components of this strategy. More precise figures will be determined in the next two weeks.

How much will it cost to deploy these troops to Afghanistan?

- The direct costs for the military related to the new strategy in Fiscal Year 2010 are expected to range between \$25 billion and \$30 billion. More precise costs will be determined in the next two weeks.

- In addition, there may be costs associated with the diplomatic and civilian components of this strategy, as well as some limited DOD and intelligence costs not directly related to the surge (higher fuel costs, for instance).

- Let's be clear: the President's decision to expand the U.S. efforts in Afghanistan is based on the best interests of U.S. security. The financial costs were a concern, but not the concern.

- The Administration is in the process of finalizing the financial side of this strategy. We will look to see how much of these costs can be addressed through the funds already budgeted. The Administration will work with Congress on any necessary additional funding.

Won't this lead to more deficit spending?

- All war costs are and will be accounted for in the President's budget unlike the practice of the previous administration.

- As the President has made clear time and again, he takes our large deficits seriously, and as part of the FY 2011 budget process, we are exploring ways to put our nation on a more solid fiscal footing.

Does the Administration support a war tax to pay for this escalation?

- The President has demonstrated his commitment to being honest and upfront about the costs of military operations, and included \$130 billion to cover the anticipated costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in his Fiscal Year 2010 budget. That transparency makes the fiscal impacts clear and understandable.

- The Administration is in the process of finalizing the financial side of this strategy. We will look to see how much of these costs can be addressed through the funds already budgeted. The Administration will work with Congress on any necessary additional funding.

IF PRESSED: Are you ruling out a war tax?

- The Administration will work with Congress to find the best way to pay for the new strategy in Afghanistan, as well as for the 68,000 troops already there and the troops who continue to serve in Iraq costs that have been pushed aside for too long.

- The President has demonstrated his commitment to being honest and upfront about the costs of military operations, and included \$130 billion to cover the anticipated costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in his Fiscal Year 2010 budget. That transparency fully owns up to the costs of this war and insists that they get added to the overall budget debate that is going to have to take place over the next several years.

Do you think these increased war costs will jeopardize your domestic agenda?

- No.

- In developing his budget, the President is keenly aware of the interaction between domestic and international priorities and the importance of both.

Why are the final cost numbers not available now?
Weren't they essential to the President's decision process?

- The President's decision was informed by a reliable estimate of approximately \$1 million per soldier per year. The costs informed the President's decision, but did not determine it.

- The President's decision to expand the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is based on the best interests of U.S. security. The financial costs were a concern, but not the concern. They informed the President's decision, but did not drive it.

- Final figures are dependent in part on operational decisions (i.e., speed of deployment, timing of deployment). Now that the strategy decision is final, the Administration will work to provide more thorough data on the best approaches to execute the mission.

Will additional funding only be requested for the Defense Department? Or does the Administration anticipate needing funds for other departments?

- The President outlined a comprehensive strategy for Afghanistan. While the major funding will be for the military, there also may be requirements for the State Department, for medical care for our troops, and for other activities.

- The Administration is working through the overall mission requirements now and expects final financial cost data within two weeks.

Surely, the State Department will need more funding. You're talking about a civilian surge to help with humanitarian and development needs. How much will that require?

- There may be additional costs associated with the diplomatic and civilian components of this strategy. There also are programmatic activities that may be necessary as the troop level expands in Afghanistan.

- The Administration is working through the potential policy and resource implications for all of the departments and agencies. More precise figures will be determined in the next two weeks.

- Final figures are dependent in part on operational decisions (i.e., speed of deployment, timing of deployment) and a consideration of the overall impacts. Now that the strategy decision is final, the Administration will work to provide more thorough data on the best approaches to execute the mission.

Will you need more money to pay for the medical care for our troops, especially when they come home?

- The medical care of our troops and our veterans is a top priority for this President. The Administration is committed to ensuring that our troops receive the best quality care for their injuries, and the best support as they return home.

- If it's determined that additional funds are necessary to ensure that quality of care for our troops and veterans, then the Administration will work with Congress to provide those resources.

IF PRESSED: But are you doing enough now to prepare for what will surely be a bigger strain on Defense and VA medical care?

- The President has proposed a record funding increase for the VA providing over \$25 billion in new money over the next five years. A primary focus area is improving treatment for post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and associated ailments -- the signature military medical challenges facing the Department for years to come.

- The President also pressed the Defense Department for substantial improvements to the care for wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers -- especially increased screening and treatment of mental health conditions. The Defense Department is completing additional wounded warrior complexes at posts throughout the continental U.S., as well as sites in Alaska, Hawaii and Germany.

- If it's determined that additional funds are necessary to continue providing high-quality care to our troops and veterans, then the Administration will work with Congress to provide those resources.

Will you need to request supplemental funding?

- The Administration will look to see how much of these costs can be addressed through the funds already budgeted. The Administration will work with Congress on any necessary additional funding.

Earlier this year, didn't you say, "No more supplemental bills"?

- The President's budget requested \$130 billion for full-year funding for the then-anticipated costs in Iraq and Afghanistan. The President has made clear his commitment to funding the wars in an upfront, transparent manner.

- The Administration will work with Congress on any additional funding necessary because of changes to our strategy.

Isn't the Administration's estimate roughly \$1 million/troop larger than the Pentagon early cost estimate (approximately \$500k/troop)?

- In the initial accounting, DOD provided estimates with a limited scope, looking almost exclusively at direct costs per soldier, such as pay, food, medical support, and personal equipment like body armor.

- In the final accounting, the Administration builds on the Pentagon data, providing more thorough cost estimates that include support and equipment functions such as mine resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) armored vehicles and other major, necessary items. These costs tend to increase as troop levels increase.

- The final Administration accounting also may include funding needed for the other departments.

IF PRESSED for more on the differences between early Pentagon cost assessments and Administration assessments:

There are two basic methods used to estimate the costs of additional troops for Afghanistan. Both methods provide only rule-of-thumb estimates of the potential costs of adding more troops. The cost estimates below are therefore a range of the potential costs rather than

an exact number.

- The first method (DOD method) captures costs that result directly from deploying more troops, such as pay, food, medical support, fuel, equipment maintenance and repair, and personal equipment (e.g., body armor). This method yields an estimated cost per troop of about \$500,000, taking into account costs in both Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as support costs in the region. In Afghanistan, where costs are generally higher due to its difficult terrain and poor infrastructure, the estimated cost per troop is roughly \$700,000.

- The second method (Administration method) "fully burdens" the cost per troop with a pro-rata share of other war-related costs in Afghanistan, such as major end-item purchases like airplanes, helicopters, trucks (including mine-resistant ambush-protected (MRAP) vehicles), as well as military construction and the costs to train and equip the Afghan security forces. These costs are not directly linked to the number of deployed troops, but tend to increase as troop levels increase. This method yields an estimated cost per troop of roughly \$1 million.

11. (U) Minimize considered.

CLINTON